

THE

XIXth

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

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MAY 23, 1843.  
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PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.
1843.

CONSTITUTION,

(AS AMENDED, MAY, 1831.)

Art. I. This Society shall be known by the name of the "AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION."—Its objects are to concentrate the efforts of Sabbath School Societies in the different sections of our country—to strengthen the hands of the friends of religious instruction on the Lord's day—to disseminate useful information—circulate moral and religious publications in every part of the land, and to endeavour to plant a Sunday School wherever there is a population.

Art. II. Each subscriber of three dollars annually, shall be a member.—Each subscriber paying thirty dollars at one time, shall be a member for life. Sunday School Societies or Unions sending a copy of their constitution, list of their officers, and an annual report, shall be auxiliary, and be entitled to purchase books at the reduced prices.

Art. III. The affairs and funds of this Society shall be under the direction of a Board, consisting of a President, Vice Presidents, a Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and thirty-six Managers, twenty-four of whom shall reside in the city of Philadelphia or its vicinity. The Managers shall be divided into three classes, whose terms of service shall be respectively one, two, and three years; but they may be re-elected.

Art. IV. The officers and Managers shall be laymen, and shall be elected by ballot.

Art. V. The Managers shall annually elect all officers of the Society, fill vacancies in their own body, make their own by-laws, publish such books, periodical works, and tracts, as they may deem expedient, and may adopt such other measures as may, in their opinion, promote the objects of the Association. Seven Managers shall constitute a quorum.

Art. VI. The annual meetings of the Society shall be held at Philadelphia, on the first Tuesday after the 20th of May, when the proceedings of the past year shall be reported, the accounts presented, and the Managers chosen. Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum does not appear on the day of the annual meeting, the election of Managers shall take place at the next meeting whenever a quorum appears, and the Managers of the Society shall remain in office until a new election takes place.

Art. VII. Special meetings of the Society shall be called by the President, or in his absence by either of the Vice Presidents, at the written request of six managers; of which meeting three days' public notice shall be given.

Art. VIII. Officers of Sunday School Unions auxiliary to this Society, and clergymen whose schools are attached to it, shall have the privilege of attending the stated meetings of the Board of Managers.

Art. IX. No alteration in this constitution shall take place, unless the same shall be proposed, in writing, to the Board of Managers, at least three months previous to its adoption, and be approved by two-thirds of the members present, at a meeting duly notified.

NINETEENTH REPORT.

THE best human machinery employed for moral purposes is so imperfect, and the working of it, under every advantage, is so defective and irregular, that we are prepared for many inequalities and disappointments. But, we think, no one can contemplate the results of the institution of Sunday-schools, imperfect as they are, without feeling encouraged to improve and extend what has proved so greatly conducive to the highest interests of the country.

In our ninth and fifteenth annual reports, we reviewed the transactions of the Society previously to those periods, respectively, with some minuteness; and in the seventeenth and eighteenth, we endeavoured to show the fitness of its organization and the adequacy of its agency to supply the means of Christian instruction to the great multitude of destitute children and youth within our borders. We propose, in this report, to set before the Society and its friends, the present posture of our affairs, and to suggest such measures for the prosecution of our work as seem to us practicable, and, at the present juncture, highly important. We can promise nothing new on a subject so familiar to the religious community; and yet talking and writing about the same thing, over and over again, seems to be the only way of making any permanent or general impression of its importance. As it is by the continual dropping of disguised or plausible error that it insensibly makes its own lodging-place in the mind, so it is only by a thousand repetitions of truth that it gains even the thoughtful consideration of the busy world.

The total means of the last year from	
all sources, is - - - - -	\$68,200 88
Of this sum, our book sales	
were - - - - -	\$55,895 40
And our donations - - -	12,305 58

Both these items are less than they were last year ; but not so much less as we had reason to apprehend, from the extreme depression of all kinds of business and enterprise. We are grateful that a gracious Providence has so kindly favoured us in a year of unprecedented trial.

It will be observed, that the amount received for sales adds nothing to our means of extending Sunday-schools, or supplying them with libraries. Our books sell for just about what they cost, adding the expenses of sale, so that the benevolent fund which we have had at our disposal during the year, is but a little more than \$12,000: and from this is to be deducted the expenses of its collection. We have done what we could ;—and we are willing to be tried by the rule which accepts a man according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not.

By the decease of Hon. FRANCIS S. KEY, of the District of Columbia, we lose one of our earliest and most steadfast advocates and patrons. His frequent and liberal contributions to our funds, and his readiness at all times to vindicate the principles and advance the usefulness of the Society, furnished unequivocal evidence of his interest in our cause.

The mission of the Rev. Dr. TYNG, as a deputation from our Society to the *London Sunday-school Union* and the *London Religious Tract Society*, was attended with very desirable results. The happy relations we sustain to these kindred institutions are greatly strengthened and enlarged by the interchange of such offices ; and we hope to enjoy the opportunity of reciprocating the kindness

and cordiality with which our representatives have always been received by our trans-Atlantic brethren.

Among the fruits of Dr. TYNG's mission were two donations—one from the *Sunday-school Union*, which, after paying duties and charges, is available for our benevolent purposes, to the amount of \$376 78, and the other from the *Religious Tract Society*, which is valued at \$450;—and which is made on condition that we add to it the like sum;—and that the joint amount shall be appropriated to the supply of needy schools with libraries, as far as practicable in districts where there are British emigrants. The plan of executing this benevolent design is matured, and awaits only the contribution of our share of the amount, for which, as for all other means of doing good, we must look to our Christian friends.

We added to our periodical publications at the beginning of this year, the "*Youth's Penny Gazette*." It seemed to us, that if it is expedient and proper to take advantage of the Sunday-school organization to circulate newspapers of any kind for the entertainment and instruction of children, those should be encouraged which have a predominant Sunday-school character, and which are issued under Sunday-school auspices and from responsible sources. Several useful periodicals of this character were already in circulation, and we hope that the addition of ours will prove an advantage to all, and a detriment to none. We also needed such a medium through which to keep ourselves before the rising race, as among their earliest and best friends, and to establish between us and them some permanent organ of communication. We have had gratifying proof that such a paper was wanted and will be sustained.

The reports brought home to your Board by the officers and agents of the Society, who have had recent op-

portunities of visiting the schools in various parts of the country, are by no means as favourable as we could wish, touching the points of order and discipline, or the general qualifications of teachers. It is to be feared that a multitude of teachers venture upon the solemn and momentous duties of their calling, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with little, if any, preparation of mind or heart. It is not our province to rebuke such presumption, but we may expostulate with the guilty parties, and beseech them, for Christ's sake, no longer to trifle with His word, or with the precious souls He died to redeem; and it is moreover our duty to do whatever we can to remedy these defects, and supply the means of improvement. For nearly twenty years, the Society has published a periodical, expressly for teachers, and every effort has been made to suit their circumstances, in matter, manner and price. Our success has been various, but never satisfactory. We have now resolved to make another effort to bring within the reach of every teacher, at short intervals, and at a merely nominal price, instruction, excitement, and encouragement, in the prosecution of his work. To this end, after July 1st, ensuing, we shall publish the SUNDAY-SCHOOL JOURNAL for TWENTY-FIVE CENTS a year, just as it is now published for *One Dollar* a year. We hope the simple annunciation of such a measure will secure for it the kind co-operation of clergymen, superintendents, and teachers throughout the country.

We have issued during the year eighty-four distinct publications—twenty of which are bound volumes for the library, ranging from 24 to 324 pages. Among them are some of the most useful and instructive books that bear the Society's imprint. An unusual proportion of the manuscripts which have been kindly submitted to the examination of our Committee, have been declined for various

reasons; though it may be said of them, as well as of many of the works suggested for republication, that they would be far more suitable for Sunday-school libraries than a large proportion of those which are purchased for that purpose. But the Committee continue in the persuasion that the Society's influence should not be given to the undue multiplication of this class of books, but that our aim should be to add steadily to our stock, seeking rather to improve the character than greatly to extend the number. We are satisfied that we do a better service to Sunday-schools, to our contributors, and to posterity, by the careful preparation and publication of twenty books in the year, than by the issue of twenty times that number, if, here and there, one must bear the marks of haste and defective judgment.

It is impossible for any one to live in such a day of excitement and inquiry as ours, touching points of vital interest to the cause of the Redeemer, without having painful anxieties awakened, mingled, perhaps, with many cheering hopes. As a religious institution, established for the purpose of diffusing (especially among children and youth) a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and leading them to an early, steadfast, and intelligent belief of them, as the only sufficient rule of faith and duty, we confess that we cannot look without solicitude at the prevalence of sentiments or tendencies that might defeat this great end. We feel bound to contend earnestly, though in the spirit of love and meekness, for the principles of the Reformation, in contradistinction to the mind-enslaving and soul-destroying errors and superstitions against which those principles were arrayed in the sixteenth century. And it is among the happiest convictions of your Board, that those principles are embodied in the doctrines which our books inculcate; and that such a Union as ours

can exist, and its grand objects be, in so large a measure, attained, and yet leave all our more private denominational and individual obligations unimpaired. It is thus demonstrated, that Protestant union and Protestant freedom are not inconvertible terms. We had designed to spread before the Society some of the schemes now in progress for the preparation and diffusion of a class of juvenile books, the character and influence of which are utterly subversive of what intelligent Protestant Christians regard as the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, but it would give a disproportionate prominence to this topic of our report. It must, therefore, suffice to say, that the counteracting influence of truth, in its simplest form, for the youngest mind, cannot be too early or too skilfully employed, with any hope of success.

The smallest half-penny book may inculcate the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, or any other vital truth of Christianity, as impressively and as savingly as a folio. And a book of this diminutive size refutes the argument of the infidel, or exposes the sophistry of the false reasoner, or shows the weakness and perverseness of the errorist, with permanent effect, long before there is sufficient physical strength to lift a body of divinity. A good little book is, *from its very size*, a great blessing. It is the small rain upon the tender herb. A large book may be very important and very useful, and sometimes necessary, but its bulk and cost must, of course, greatly restrict its circulation. A good little book, on the contrary, is cheap, portable, soon read, easily remembered, and scattered far and wide without much cost to anybody. It comes to all ages in an inoffensive, if not an attractive, character, and sometimes does execution, by its reflex influence, in unexpected forms. A clergyman in Virginia furnishes us with a pleasing instance of the utility of one of these unassuming little truth-tellers.

"Among the books you sent me last fall," he says, "there was one called the *Picture Book*, with passages of Scripture under the pictures. I gave it as a Christmas present to one of my little friends—a lovely little fellow about *four years* of age. Just before leaving Maryland in May, I called on his mother, who told me that J. had committed his little book to memory, and that a short time previous to my visit, he saw his father take a glass of brandy and water at dinner. The little fellow looked at him with the utmost astonishment, and exclaimed, 'Why, father!' 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!' 'Does not Solomon say so, mother? Is father wise?'"

This was a passage which he had read in his little book, under a picture of several men fighting. No one had put him up to it. Children are the most powerful preachers oftentimes, and so are children's little books.

The increasing and extending demand for the Society's publications make an enlargement of our stock quite indispensable, but to do this with our limited means is out of the question. At the same time, there seems to be an imperative necessity that we should conform in prices, and in the advantages we offer to purchasers, to the unprecedented reduction by which the publishers of other books hope to push their circulation. We have often urged it upon the attention of our benevolent friends, as a safe and useful appropriation of their bounty, to give such sums as may be necessary to stereotype choice books, or to provide for their perpetuity.

The Chinese afford us an example, which, *in its spirit* at least, might well be imitated by some of our wealthy Christians:—They print books, which they consider good, by voluntary subscription. Some persons subscribe, and have the work cut in wood; a few copies are then printed, stating where the books are deposited, and others are invited to have additional copies struck off, to be circulated for the public benefit. The invitation is frequently accepted. An individual who wishes for fifty or

a hundred copies, sends to the warehouse, the number desired is then printed off, and his name duly registered among the subscribers to the object. When a native of China, professing to be devout, receives some special favour at the hand of Providence, he prints, and leaves in a neighbouring temple, 2200 small tracts, bearing his name; these contain a form of prayer, and are distributed gratuitously.

If some wealthy friend would order 1000 impressions of "The Way of Life," or "The Holy War," or "The Teacher Taught," to be taken from the plates and gratuitously distributed to his order, or at the discretion of the Society, could the trifling amount invested be better spent?

Before dismissing this topic, we cannot refrain from suggesting two or three considerations to those who provide books for children. Since so large a share of the attention of authors and publishers is given to the supply of their wants, much more caution is needful to avoid the evil and secure the good. There are certainly a great many more good books and more beautiful books now, than there were twenty or thirty years ago; but, as it is with almost every thing else in our ruined world, the evil generally keeps pace with the good, and too often outruns it. An attractive exterior and a redundancy of embellishments give currency to extreme folly, if not to pernicious error. A "taking" title is a passport to the favour of multitudes, and sometimes a child's whim will govern the judgment of an otherwise judicious parent. To give a child a book is to give him a companion whose influence may be as lasting as eternity; and how considerate parents can deliberately permit their children to read books, of whose character and tendency they are not themselves informed, is a problem not easy to solve.

It is impossible to look without some misgivings upon

the present multiplication of cheap and attractive books. The sudden influx of this tide of cheap popular literature is altogether a new thing under the sun. Nothing like it has occurred since the invention of printing. It is difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy, what proportion of this mass of reading is useless, mischievous, or positively corrupting. Unquestionably, a vast amount of useful and most profitable reading is furnished in this cheap form; but the channels by which the multitude of readers are reached are overflowing with profaneness, ribaldry, licentiousness, personal brawls and incentives to all manner of evil. We could easily show that this is no morbid view of the existing state of things. It is asserted, as we suppose on credible authority, that not less than 600,000 publications, devoted to the propagation of one of the most senseless and pernicious delusions of this delusion-loving age, were circulated between Sept. 1, and Feb. 1, last past—a period of only five months. And a late English work speaks with astonishment of the great demand there is, both in England and France, for dream-books and other trash of the same kind. Two dream-books in England enjoy an extraordinary popularity, and have run through upwards of fifty editions in London alone, besides being reprinted in Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dublin. It is stated on the authority of one who is curious in these matters, that “there is a demand for these works (which are sold at sums varying from a penny to sixpence, chiefly to servant-girls and imperfectly educated people, all over the country) of upwards of 11,000 annually; and that at no period during the last thirty years has the average number sold been less than this.” When it is considered that this is the very class of persons who have most to do with children, and especially with the children of the wealthy

and influential classes, we shall find it difficult to assign bounds to the extent of the mischief.

The true criterion of popular taste, in this respect, is always furnished by the press itself. That which most readily sells is most abundantly furnished. The supply is not only proportioned to the demand, but it is of the same nature. The press, for the most part, caters to public taste *as it is*, and seldom finds inclination or opportunity to improve it. In our country, especially, where public opinion makes and abrogates the law, it is apparent that the press is oftener the slave, or the dupe, than the director, or counsellor of the popular will.

To overcome this evil, the preventive process has a thousand advantages over the remedial. The absence of opposing obstacles, and the proverbial susceptibility of infancy and childhood, invite and urge us to seize that golden opportunity, to fill the mind with truth, and fortify it against all the ordinary forms of aggressive error. The many testimonies we have received within a few months, to the usefulness of well-organized and well-instructed infant-schools or classes, have strengthened our convictions that the more general introduction of them into our Sunday-school arrangements would be attended with the happiest consequences.

It is indeed to be regretted that the errors of judgment and practice into which some may have fallen, in the management of these schools in our country, should have combined, with other causes, to bring them into any disrepute, or distrust. For whatever abuses may have attended the application of the system among us, that are not necessarily incident to it, the Home and Colonial Infant School Society of England has been the means of greatly improving and extending the system in that country and its dependencies. Their apparatus and forms of

illustrating and applying elementary knowledge, are among the most perfect instruments of instruction with which we are acquainted. We are well persuaded that myriads of little children might be gathered into the infant department of Sunday-schools, and being there instructed in the simplest religious knowledge, would be well prepared for the higher grade of instruction in the Sunday-school, and would become so associated and identified with it, as to make an unnecessary separation from it very rare. Nothing can be clearer than these positions. Accustom a child at three or four years of age to the daily intelligent repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and we need not say how difficult it would be to reconcile him to the *Ave Marias* of popish idolatry. A striking illustration of this principle recently came to our knowledge, from an authentic source :—

It is the case of a middle-aged man, who had been suffering from convulsive fits ever since he was a boy of nine years old. They were first caused by a fright. In fact, his mind was bordering upon idiocy, and was quite incapable of receiving new impressions. "One day," says the narrator, "talking to his aged mother of the necessity of personal religion, I perceived the unfortunate man became interested in my observations on prayer. He drew my attention, though his attempts to speak were painful in the extreme. In his stammering way, he said 'that he could pray too.' Upon inquiring what he prayed, he replied, 'Our Parder 'chart in heaven,' and then indistinctly repeated the whole of the Lord's Prayer. This he has done for more than twenty years! Perhaps it is the only hope to which he clings—certainly the only spiritual exercise he can now enjoy. The prayer was learned at a Sunday-school, before he met with the fright."

It is in infant schools and classes, that these indelible impressions are made;—and we would fain hope that a brighter day for them is at hand, and that we shall emulate our brethren upon the opposite shore. We have been gratified with the opportunity, within a few months, of supplying some foreign mission stations with our own publications in this department, and with portions of the British Society's also. The influence of schools of this class upon a heathen population, must be boundlessly beneficial. They provide for children at an age when they are most burdensome to their natural care-takers—when their labour is of no avail, and when they are generally supposed to be incapable of much impression for good or evil. So simple and powerful an instrument for moulding a generation of men, is strangely undervalued among us. “I will confess,” says a subject of a European despot, “that I look to the moral, religious and intellectual education received at such institutions as infant-schools, for the regeneration of my country.” *Public opinion is formed by influences upon childhood.*

The views we have presented on this subject are so obvious, that it seems almost idle to set them forth in an annual report, and yet, if we may judge from the relative position which infant and Sunday-schools occupy, compared with other agencies for the improvement and elevation of society, we might well suppose that their power was quite subordinate, if not insignificant. Which of the general institutions of our country, for kindred purposes, does not seem to absorb more of the interest and alms of the church, than these? Where is the community that renders to them the sympathy, pecuniary aid and cordial sustentation for which their assumed and admitted importance calls? How many are the churches whose best strength, clerical and lay—male and female—is incorpo-

rated into their Sunday and infant schools? And where is the Sunday-school or infant-school that has attained to the measure of usefulness of which it is capable were it favoured with the constant, patient and skilful nourishment of the church with which it is connected?

Would it not be a vast improvement in our moral economy, to bring a few organs of benevolent action to the highest degree of improvement, rather than to divide our attention, sympathy and beneficence among an endless variety?

If we would successfully stem the tide of frivolity and licentiousness to which we just now referred, we must, sooner or later, resort to some such power as the Sunday and infant school system furnishes, and wield it with the most perfect skill and effect of which it is capable. It is in vain to expect an adequate counteracting influence, without we can secure a closer concentration of counsels and interests among those who seek to advance the Redeemer's kingdom. When, or how this is to be brought about, it is neither the time nor occasion to inquire.

The very general revival of the religious spirit all over our land, during the last year or two, has been accompanied with cheering, though by no means new or unexpected, evidences of the influence of faithful Sunday-school teaching; and it is a kind of evidence which fearfully rebukes the unbelief of some, and the listlessness and unbelief of many.

It is often impossible to trace with any exactness the progress of religious emotions. Our Saviour himself instructs us to this effect when he says, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Of one thing, however, we may rest assured, that those impres-

sions of truth which are made *earliest*, and under circumstances most favourable to their vividness and permanency, are those which generally lead to the formation of Christian character.

The *proximate* means of conversion may be a sermon, or an event of providence, or the counsel of a friend, or mere sympathy. The succession of the blade, the ear and the full corn in the ear, may be very obvious; but the little seed, and the secret germination and the silent birth of the tender plant lie back in the spring-time of life, or in the elements of Christian instruction, and are seldom called to mind. The verse of a hymn—an answer in the question-book, or catechism, a library book, or sermon—a pictorial representation of some scriptural scene, and more frequently still, the serious and timely expostulation, or the gentle rebuke of a Sunday-school teacher, may be justly referred to as the means employed by the Holy Spirit to seal instruction to the heart, and to originate a train of exercises that He finally crowns with eternal blessings. The teacher who diligently scatters the seeds of divine truth upon six or eight tender hearts, Sabbath after Sabbath, for a series of years, need not doubt that the fruits will ultimately appear to the praise and glory of God's grace. His labour is not seen distinctly, perhaps, in immediate connection with the public acknowledgment of Christ; but it is nevertheless attributable to the instrumentality of that teacher's labours and prayers, in some obscure corner of a Sunday-school room, that that convert was made willing in the day of God's power. And every such convert received into the fellowship of believers, only enhances their obligation to pray for Sunday-schools, and to improve and extend their influence till the earth is filled with the knowledge of God.

An interesting circumstance touching this point has

come to our knowledge lately, respecting a school in Shelbyville, (Kentucky,) established by the special care of the late *Rev. Dr. John Breckinridge*, the same year in which our institution was organized. It was superintended for some time by one who is now a preacher of the gospel; and it has always been under the oversight of an officer of the church. It has never been discontinued a single Sabbath, for any cause, since it was established, nineteen years ago; and it can now be said of it, that EVERY SCHOLAR of suitable age, who has regularly attended it, has embraced religion. Since January, 1837, eighty-three Sunday-scholars have joined the church to which the school is attached, or other churches in the vicinity.

The collecting agencies we have employed for several years, have been continued with as much success as the peculiar state of the country would perhaps warrant us to expect. The importance of retaining and increasing the aid and sympathy of New England in our efforts, is sufficiently obvious. None have more precious interests at stake in the West, than the people of these States; and to none can an appeal for aid be carried, as we have supposed, with more power and effect. The *Rev. Thomas M. Smith*, late of New Bedford, (Mass.,) has been appointed to the agency during the last year, and is prosecuting it with prudence and fidelity. A temporary arrangement has also been made with the New England Sunday-school Union, for a joint agency to the Baptist churches within their bounds, which has been attended thus far with favourable results. The *Rev. Mr. Campfield*, who has been for many years laboriously engaged in the Society's service, is still charged with the New York agency, from which we derive a very considerable proportion of our means of doing good. Besides the kind

patronage of our depository, and the liberal contributions of the churches in that city, several valuable missionary associations have been formed in different Sunday-schools, by whose aid we are enabled to do much for the destitute of distant States. To these, and to all the churches, societies or individuals, there and elsewhere, who have aided us in our attempts to do good, we beg to express the Society's grateful acknowledgments.

One of the causes that may have tended to diminish our revenue for benevolent purposes, is perhaps the increased interest that is felt in objects of a strictly denominational character. We do not complain of this. If it becomes excessive, it will work its own cure. But we have reason to believe that a mistaken notion prevails respecting the indispensableness of the Union principle for certain purposes, and chiefly in the organization of Sunday-schools and the supply of libraries. Indeed, there is perhaps no benevolent institution known among us, that so much requires the employment of this principle as ours. There are objects not within our range, for the accomplishment of which denominational efforts are necessary, and alone suitable. Their utility and importance in their place, we all feel;—and the members of your Board, who meet from time to time to pray and take counsel together respecting the work we have in hand, have as strong denominational attachments and sympathies as any of their fellow-Christians. But we see that a vast good may be accomplished by a combined influence, which is entirely unattainable in our denominational relations. We see, that without involving the sacrifice of any principle, the doctrines of our holy religion, on the faith of which rests our hope of acceptance with God, can be promulgated far and wide, in vast districts of our country, where there are comparatively no

means of grace, and to which a denominational society would have but very partial access.

With these views we—a company of Christian laymen, from the various evangelical denominations of the country,—Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Congregational, Reformed Dutch, &c. &c.; having at our disposal the instrument of incalculable good to millions of children and youth who are rising up around us,—present our cause to the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to those of our fellow-citizens who have confidence in the principles and objects of the Society; and we ask, with great boldness and confidence, for a larger measure of their sympathy and aid than we have ever yet enjoyed. As Protestants, we all hold that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. And the rule of faith and duty being revealed, for our guidance and government, in the Holy Scriptures, we hold every man responsible to God *only* for his construction and application of it. Hence, to diffuse a knowledge of these Scriptures, and to inculcate their simplest elementary truths before the natural corruption of the heart developes itself in principles and habits of evil doing, and while impressions of every kind are most deeply and easily made, is an object taking precedence, in many respects, of any and all others. And it may not be amiss to remind our friends and contributors that ours is now the only Sunday-school Society in this country whose publications are not denominational. Hence, the aid given to us is not withheld from any other Society of the same character. It must be given to us, or not given at all; for such an object as ours is not and cannot be presented by any other Society.

The very general destitution of the Scriptures, which our exploring missionaries report to us from time to time,

has confirmed a conviction which was long ago forced upon us, that one of the most eligible and economical modes of circulating that blessed volume, and especially the New Testament, would be by an arrangement with the general Sunday-school Societies of the country, for the supply of the destitute children in their schools respectively. The Young Men's Bible Society of New York generously put at our disposal, some years ago, twenty thousand Testaments, which we have distributed as effectually and as faithfully as it could have been done by the most laborious personal agency. There is scarcely an application received for a donation of Sunday-school books, which does not include copies of the Bible or Testament, and we have often experienced the kindness and liberality of our neighbours, the Pennsylvania Bible Society, in the ready supply of such wants. If a few thousand cheap Bibles and Testaments were put at the disposal of our Board, for distribution among the destitute families represented in our schools, we have abundant safeguards for the judicious and faithful execution of the benevolent design; and it is not only a mode of action free from any offensive features, but the relation of the teacher to the family of his pupil gives manifold incidental advantages which he can improve for the joint interest of both the Bible and Sunday-school Societies without any expense to either.

Our missionary labour has been confined chiefly to the states of Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri. Some very inviting places of missionary labour and some very desirable appointments are to this moment under the consideration of your Board. But while the means which are furnished for the work are so inadequate and uncertain, every movement must be made with difficulty, and the system and vigour which are indispensable to the suc-

cess of missionary labour—especially in the distant districts of the West—must remain quite beyond our command.

Besides our missionary efforts, the supply of destitute schools, wholly or in part, with a library, has occupied an unusual share of our time and attention. To enumerate the cases, and especially to dwell upon them long enough to give our friends any just idea of the interest and importance with which they are presented to us, would require their attention for many hours. It must suffice to say, that we have distributed the value of \$2530 among 216 schools, scattered over 22 States and Territories, and averaging about \$12 to each school. We have also given to various foreign schools and mission-stations to the value of \$968—making nearly \$4000 in donations of books.

If the Society has refrained for many years to propose any specific measure to awaken the attention or enlist anew the sympathies of its friends, it is not because such measures have not been before us as subjects of constant and anxious deliberation. But the mischievous reaction of spasmodic efforts, whether in physics or morals, has seemed to us an overbalance for any good they effect.

There is, however, an obvious propriety in defining, for more intelligent apprehension, some precise object, or measure to which the attention and energies of the Society should be more especially directed, and the probable attainment of which may be an incentive to higher and steadier efforts:

To this end, your Board would respectfully propose to the Society and its coadjutors, the following sketch of a plan touching one section of the country and one province of our influence. It will be readily supposed that we refer to the Western and South-western States and Territories.

We have sufficient authority for the opinion, that at least five hundred Sunday-schools, embracing from fifty to one hundred thousand children, can be established, in the space of a twelvemonth, in destitute districts of the States we have named, upon a permanent foundation, if each is supplied at the outset with a suitable library and the requisite elementary books.

It would be necessary to appropriate not less than \$10 on an average, or about nine days' time in missionary labour, to each school, (though the apportionment both of time and expense would vary with the circumstances of places and people;) and the average value of from \$20. to \$30 in books, would probably suffice to put a school in successful operation. And this proposed expense of \$35 or \$40 would probably cover a period of three seasons or years—being \$12 or \$13 for each school.

That missionary labour, in some form, and to some extent, must be employed, is admitted on all hands. In the neighbourhood of the older and more populous towns new schools may be organized, from time to time, without foreign aid. Very efficient and laudable efforts of this kind have been made recently in Cincinnati and its vicinity; in Morgan County, Illinois; and St. Louis, Mo.; and, doubtless, in many other places. But, generally, the labour and strength of Sunday-school operatives are exhausted upon their own field, and they have neither time nor ability to extend a helping hand to the destitute around them. Such localities must, therefore, be especially visited, informed and assisted; and this must be done by a steady and orderly course of action. When a school is collected and properly organized, its continuance can be secured by no means so certainly and cheaply as by a library. To this point we have volumes of testimony; and experience has conclusively shown that it

will be quite unsafe to trust, for the acquisition of this indispensable appendage, to any contingencies. The library *must be a part of the original structure of the school*. The missionary must have in his possession, or within his immediate reach, such a library, &c. as each school requires, so that he can supply it on the first gathering of the school for instruction. We need not repeat that the Society's means will not allow of any considerable dispersion of our stock for such a purpose. Our present means scarcely enable us to keep good our home-supply. The appropriation of \$5,000, or even \$3,000, to a purpose like that before us, would sensibly embarrass our ordinary operations. But the lowest estimate we can form far exceeds the largest of these sums. Second-hand books might be supplied to some extent, but not with sufficient certainty, nor, on the whole, in quantity or quality to affect materially any estimate we have been able to make. Nevertheless, to avail ourselves of all the aid which may be rendered in this form, we have set apart a room in the Society's buildings specially for this object. There we shall collect and arrange all books and other articles which schools or individuals may contribute, so that a selection may be readily made, and the design of the donors be most fully accomplished.

The main supply must still be from fresh stock, and we propose to put up several parcels, embracing a library and a few elementary books of various quantities and prices, and assorted as skilfully as may be, in imagination, to suit the circumstances of the schools to be formed. For schools in sparse settlements, where there are comparatively few who would be able to avail themselves of the benefits of a library, \$5 or \$10 worth of the lowest and cheapest series, with a good supply of elementary books, would suffice; while in an older place and denser popula-

tion, a library worth \$25 or \$30, with a much smaller proportion of text-books, would be required.

We should be disposed to put up in each parcel two or three Bibles and half a dozen Testaments, and to add reports of Sunday-schools, catalogues and other cheap documents, such as might conduce to the future advancement of the school. These parcels, properly secured and labelled, would be committed to the missionary as his outfit, and to be accounted for in the strictest manner. His commission should be full and explicit on this subject. The parcels should be put to him at cost and charges. It should be his aim to persuade every school to make some effort for itself. If but a few cents were raised, it would be better for all parties that the effort should be made. In all cases where *half* the requisite sum is contributed by a new and needy school, it should be the duty of the missionary to present the other half as a donation from the Society. A full and accurate report in detail would be expected from month to month; and all necessary and practicable precautions taken to prevent any abuse of authority, or neglect of duty. Circumstances would doubtless often occur requiring important modifications of any general plan; but it is needless to advert to them in detail. It must suffice at the present moment to show, (as we think we can)—

- I. That the effort we propose is entirely feasible.
- II. That it is demanded.
- III. That it should be made with the least possible delay.
- IV. And that we, as a Society, are competent and bound to make it.

1. *It is entirely feasible.* What we have already done conclusively shows that like means, under substantially similar circumstances, will accomplish the same results.

The following extract from the report of one of our missionaries, labouring in the state of Kentucky, well illustrates this position :

“ Since my last report, I have spent sixteen days in visiting and superintending the several Sunday-schools I then reported, viz. : eight Sunday-schools, numbering 470 scholars. Since that time, I have organized another, seven miles off, numbering twenty-five scholars and two teachers. They were unable to raise a single dollar for a library, and have no school house. I got them a few books from one library, and a gentleman who recently settled in that neighbourhood, and who was connected with the Sunday-school there, generously opened his house to us, until we can get another school-room. He and his lady are, thus far, the only teachers. Should we be able to procure a library, we will have, I doubt not, a large school there in the summer. They had never heard of one until I visited them in June last, nor had they any means of grace whatever. There was not a member of any church, nor a single copy of the New Testament within four miles round ; and, of course, the state of education was truly deplorable. I visited them often ; and whenever they knew that the Sunday-school man was to be out, the house would be filled to overflowing, not only with children, but with their parents. I wish every supporter of the American Sunday-school Union could have witnessed the sight. The library that was purchased has been read attentively by all those that could read :—and those that could not, have had them read to them and their families. *The Sabbath-school, with those little messengers, has proved the harbinger of a glorious revival.* At a meeting held there last week, *twenty-five* were received into the Church, nearly all of whom have been connected with the Sunday-school. What hath God wrought !—and what encouragement for me to go forward with redoubled energy in this glorious cause ! That every Sunday-school that your Society has or ever may organize, may be equally blessed as the one now described, is the fervent prayer of yours,” &c.

And another says :

“ I have spent a week labouring in a new church just organized. Last spring I was there before for a few days. A Sabbath-school was established in the western suburbs ; now it numbers 250 scholars. A frame church, 60 by 30 feet, is erected, with every

promise of success. A Sabbath-school has become the nucleus of a church and congregation."

A passage from a late report of the Memphis (Tenn.) Methodist Conference strongly sets forth the position which the Sunday-school occupies, in the estimation of our laborious and indefatigable brethren of that Church, who are on the ground.

"There is no institution with which we are acquainted, so well calculated to teach the young and rising generation the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, even from their infancy, as that of Sabbath-schools. There is nothing so efficient in keeping the youthful mind free from *ignorance, error, unbelief, and superstition*, as proper training in a well-directed Sunday-school. In short, we know of no auxiliary to the Church more powerful and effectual."

From another destitute district to which we sent a donation of books, we have the following representation :

"One of our schools has been in operation only two months. It is in a neighbourhood thickly settled, and in which there was no Sabbath ; the day was spent in visiting and pleasure ; but now, for the distance of ten miles, the young people collect and attend to the services of the school. One year ago, there were many young persons from the age of eighteen to twenty, who had never listened to a sermon.

"Since the establishment of the Sabbath-school, the grog-shop is deserted, and a spirit of solemn inquiry seems to pervade the minds of the people. It is an interesting sight to see the young men, women and children, wending their way to the log school-house, on Sabbath morning, and to mark the eagerness with which they lay hold of the books. I presume there has been more reading in that neighbourhood, since the commencement of the Sabbath school, than there ever was in any two years previous."

And an intelligent citizen of Tennessee, to whom no suggestion on the subject was ever made by us, furnishes the following positive testimony to the point :

"I will venture the assertion," he says, "that if proper efforts were made by one or two good agents for one year throughout Northern Mississippi and the Western District of Tennessee, there

could be TWO HUNDRED very interesting schools established where there are now none to which the children have access. All that is necessary is that the trial should be made. The people are all greatly in favour of Sunday-schools, and they would be amply sustained. It is impossible for schools to be efficient unless there is a supply of the necessary books for conducting and giving a permanent interest to them. I attribute the success of our best schools to the fact that they are supplied with the books of the American Sunday-school Union."

These views are evidently the result of observation, or experience; and they prove that there is a power in the Sunday-school of adapting itself to the various states of society, and at the same time a self-supporting principle involved in its very action, which commends it to all intelligent communities. There seems to be no happier medium of access to a family, for any good purpose, than through the children. If not so direct, it is more unobtrusive, and though less imposing than other forms of influence, it is not less effective.

We lately had a very interesting illustration of this from the report of a school in a Western neighbourhood to which we gave a small library. The books proved a powerful attraction, and some children waded up to their knees in water to get to the school. A little boy who did not know his letters, and whose father was both ignorant and skeptical, was permitted to attend, with a *proviso* on the father's part, that no religious doctrine should be taught him. His mother was advised to send the little fellow, as the teacher said he might "catch something good." He stood by a teacher who was explaining to an older child the power of God. The little boy heard one or two simple truths that were taught, and he treasured them up. As he was sitting on the door-step one Sunday evening and looking up at the spangled sky, he exclaimed with great simplicity, "Do look at the little stars. God

made them. God made all the stars." This natural, undesigned lesson from the lips of his child, was not without an evident effect on the father's heart. Who can estimate the power of a Sunday-school to propagate the truths and influences of the gospel; and who can doubt the feasibility of increasing and improving these agencies fifty if not an hundred fold.

II. The effort we propose *is demanded*. To establish this point we will advert to but one or two facts:—

A friend in Hamilton County, (Ohio,) speaks of a school which was commenced on the first of September, 1841, with twenty scholars, and has increased to an hundred and upwards, forty of whom are adults. The means of instruction in the week-day school are very limited; there is sometimes a vacancy of six months without a school, and they do not have the benefits of preaching more than once a month on the Lord's-day. "There is not a school within my knowledge," he says, "so utterly destitute of books, or where, I think, more good can be done with books. I feel very anxious the school should have books, as its success depends on having a library. I am satisfied there is not a school district within the limits of the United States, where there has been a change in the morals of the people that is greater than in the district, since the school began."

A very intelligent gentleman, resident in Jacksonville, (Illinois,) in describing to us the necessity of such measures as we propose, says—"The young can be collected and instructed in Sabbath-schools, but they cannot be approached in any other way. The minister or missionary may pass through Illinois, and may preach often and faithfully, but, (as a general thing,) the children of the people are not there to hear."

From a citizen of Missouri we have the following statement:—

"This, Platte county, as it is called, is some 150 miles by 50, and is exceedingly destitute of the means both of intellectual and moral improvement. I know of no Sabbath-schools within a hundred miles of me this winter. It is of prime importance that an agent should operate in this region and in this State, at least for two or three months from February or March. The people are poor and much in debt; besides it is expected their lands will come into market, so that they will be very much pressed for money next spring, and hence very little money could be raised to purchase Sunday-school books; but if the American Sunday-school Union could be commended to the people through an agent, and its merits fairly discussed, and its books for gratuitous distribution circulated among the people, they would less easily become the dupes of certain (professedly) religious characters in this country, who are decidedly opposed to Sabbath-schools; and, shall I add, whatever else is of good report among the *intelligent* and humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus."

A missionary in the north-west district of Ohio says, "There is seldom any preaching on the Sabbath there, but more attend the Sabbath-school than possibly can get into the house in which it is held."

And an intelligent citizen of Rock Island, (Illinois,) writes us as follows:—

"For hundreds of miles around us our population is much scattered. Within that distance, however, many little settlements and villages are found, who would gladly organize Sabbath-schools, but for the want of books and means to procure them. Such is the severity of the pecuniary pressure upon the agricultural interests of the remote West, that the poor farmer cannot clothe his children even with common decency and comfort, and many are driven to make use of *skins* for a covering. Now you might endow, in the most munificent manner, colleges in every section of the remote West; fill the professorships with the most talented men in our land; give them libraries and apparatus of the most valuable and costly description; and then, when all is done, they would only have a name to live, for they would, *in the present condition of the country*, remain empty.

"Every farmer wants his boys and girls also at home. Their families mainly consist of young children, and even if their farms

were in a condition to release their children from labour to obtain an education, I scarcely know an individual, in the whole circle of my extensive acquaintance, who could send his son from home for an education.

“With wheat at 25 cents, corn at 10 cents, pork at 1 to 1½ cents, and fat chickens at 6½ cents each, and little or no cash at these prices; what can the present generation do for education, or even to pay for books if carried to their very door? The question then comes home to our own hearts, *what shall be done?* Shall the generation of children, on the formation of whose character depend the mortal and eternal interests and destinies of millions of human beings, be left to form that character, without the blessed influence which Sunday-school books, and Sunday-school instruction, and tracts, and the holy influence of missionary visits, are, by God’s blessing, calculated to diffuse?

“Oh that I had the capacity so to present this subject to your mind, that, through the influence which a kind God has given to your Society, you might call to your aid the stewards of His bounty, and deeply realizing the importance of the work, come up to it most heartily, and in the love and fear of God; and myriads yet unborn will have reason to bless the institution of Sabbath-schools; the yet hardly-explored West will teem with a population who love the Sabbaths of the Lord their God, and the desert and the waste land will blossom as the rose.”

We may remark, in passing, that by the liberality of a Sunday-school missionary association, and two or three benevolent friends in New York, we shall probably be enabled to furnish the writer of this letter with a wagon and a supply of books, by means of which a portion of this destitute district may be blest with schools and libraries.

From another section, we have the following petition:

“We are in the midst of a population of 700 souls, and generally a very wicked population. We have a little church of about twenty-five members, and an eminently pious young man, with a wife and three children, who preaches regularly in a small room, in which he teaches school during the week for a subsistence. Our church and church-going people are poor, but highly respectable; not only unable to do any thing towards building a church, but could not possibly raise even one hundred dollars to sustain the preaching

of the gospel. We could, with the aid of from one thousand dollars to fifteen hundred, build a neat little church; and it would so joy our hearts to see it rise! Now we know and feel that it is a great matter, and one in which we have little hope of succeeding; but we also know that He who was able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham, if it is His pleasure to bring it about, will put it into the hearts of one or more of his stewards, and it will rise; and through whose instrumentality more probably than yours? We know your influence is great, and if you undertake this great matter, it will be done.

"We have within one and a half mile of us a settled Roman priest, who preaches in a fine brick church, recently erected by a wealthy Romanist, being the only decent place of worship in the county, and it is much frequented. Comment on this state of things is surely unnecessary. We shall be very grateful, I assure you, for a gift of Sabbath-school books, tracts, &c.; in a word, any thing that speaks of the 'bread of life.' The smallest token of friendship, even the humblest tract, will be most thankfully accepted."

And a most faithful, laborious and enduring minister of the gospel in Illinois long since appealed to us in vain, in the following terms:—

"We need help, and a depository of 100 or 200 dollars would be very useful here; and a brother who called this evening, says he would be responsible that the money should be refunded after a while, when the books are sold." There are little schools about, that would raise ten dollars. If some of your benevolent folk would retrench expenses, in order to help us in these matters, it would be no more than is done among ourselves."

It is important that it should be understood in this connection, that these petitioners for help are not backward to make exertions for their own relief. Many of the applications which come before your Board from week to week, are in tenor and spirit like the following:—

"Times are very hard with us, money scarce, and exchange high; therefore we find it difficult to raise money enough at present to pay for such a library as our school needs; but we feel constrained to make our wants and situation known, hoping they

may soon be supplied, lest our children perish for lack of knowledge.

"We can send you ten dollars, which is all the money we can raise at present; but if you will be good enough to send us thirty or forty dollars' worth of books, we promise that we will do our best to pay for them in the course of this winter or the ensuing spring, which we have no doubt we can do."

An applicant from Wisconsin says:—

"By reason of the scarcity of money, we are able to send but the small sum of two dollars, which we hope to increase hereafter, and more fully to compensate whatever your generosity and ability may enable you to contribute to our increasing wants. It is our opinion, that nothing at present is wanting so much as an increase of the library, to render the Sabbath-school here the most productive means of winning souls to Christ, who may grow up in love with the institution, and in their turn support the cause, in place of those who are now in the field."

A friend in Illinois encloses an interesting report of the condition of the schools in his vicinity, drawn up by two long-trying and able advocates and promoters of the institution, and adds:—

"Our schools have no libraries, and we hardly think it possible to raise funds within the neighbourhoods where they are located, to purchase them; something might be raised in some of them, but in a majority nothing at all at present. In but few of the neighbourhoods have Sabbath-schools ever been established before. We are all very anxious to have a small library in each school, and could we raise the money for that purpose within ourselves, we would cheerfully do so, but this is impossible. We trust you will consider our case, and should you decide favourably, we are ready to take upon us (as a society) to see that each library is properly applied and carefully preserved."

One of our most devoted missionaries proposes to relinquish a portion of his small salary, to enable us to employ another labourer in a field adjoining his own. With a spirit which, if universally prevalent, would soon change the moral aspect of our race, he says:—

"I am nearly out of debt; my wants are few and easily supplied,

so that I will cheerfully reduce my salary, that more help may be obtained to do good, to promote the cause of sound learning and evangelical truth."

We need scarcely add, as another proof that such an effort as we propose is demanded, that such aid as we have been enabled to afford has been acknowledged with the most grateful emotions. A large file of letters might be produced here, of which the following may be regarded as a fair sample:—

"I wish I had power to convey to you the pleasure it gave me, and many of our brethren and sisters of the church here, to see your books come to hand. I wish I could convey to you my conviction of the *absolute* necessity of good Sunday-school libraries. I look upon the library as *essential* to the continuance of the system of Sunday-school instruction in this country; for there are so few persons who are willing to become teachers that are qualified, that it is utterly impossible to keep up the interest, in perhaps the most of the schools, for any length of time, without a library of books; and apart from good done to children and youth, you can hardly imagine how they *create* a taste for reading, and instruct and improve the church members, in this destitute land. God, no doubt, designed the family relation to be the place where, early in life, the truths of salvation should be instilled; but where this is almost entirely neglected, even among God's people, how shall that object be attained so well, or at all, unless it be through the Sunday-school and the library."

A clergyman residing at Knoxville, (Illinois,) in acknowledging a donation, says:—

"Once a month, on the Sabbath preceding the monthly concert of prayer for Sabbath-schools, I preach to the children. They regard it as their own meeting, and the sermon as intended specially for them. This is our best attended meeting, and to myself, and I think to others also, the most interesting and pleasant. I hope by thus giving the Sabbath-school a prominent place in my efforts, not only to interest, instruct and lead the children to the Saviour, but also to elevate this important institution in the regards of the church and community. Our school is well provided with books from the press of the American Sunday-school Union, and could the be-

nevolent individuals, who furnished the means to purchase this library, witness the interest taken in these books by our children, they would feel well rewarded."

III. Our third position is, that the proposed effort should be entered upon with the least possible delay.

It is admitted even by infidels and scoffers that the influence of Christianity is conducive to subordination and peace, contentment and good fellowship among men; and that its principles, when fairly established in the mind, are of incomparable strength. It is, however, as unsafe as it is unphilosophical, to postpone the inculcation of these principles till the occasion for their controlling influence arises. It must be implanted in the calm and sunny days of childhood, and nourished and strengthened, all along, by parental influence at home, aided by the exercises of the Sunday-school, the examples and instructions of the daily school, and the tender care and watchful oversight of the church and its ministry. And with all these labours and precautions there will be found no superfluous energy to resist the wiles of the adversary and to maintain the liberty with which Christ makes free. How is it with the consecration of the Sabbath, for example? When we remonstrate with men who occupy eminent stations of power and influence, or those whose habits and interests are all accustomed to, and involved in, the violation of that holy day, we do it under great disadvantages. But, had love and respect and reverence for the Sabbath been cultivated in their childhood, it would have been almost as difficult for them to engage in worldly occupations or vain amusements on that day, as it is for him, who has lived from childhood in the reckless desecration of it, to begin now to observe it as holy of the Lord and honourable. So with the Bible, so with the means of grace and so with all the institutions of religion.

Whatever, therefore, may be said of other instruments of good to man, (not of divine appointment,) the Sunday-school, FROM THE PRIORITY OF ITS INFLUENCE, if nothing else, is the surest agency for forming a desirable basis of character, individual and national.

But, apart from the uniform and acknowledged tendency of early religious instruction as a motive to prompt and vigorous efforts for the increase of Sunday-schools, there are constraining obligations of a more active and positive character.

The general precept, of divine authority, to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do, which should govern all our duties and all our designs of good to others, is especially applicable to this subject, inasmuch as the opportunity to receive the good is as fleeting as the opportunity to bestow it. The generations of a Sunday-school succeed each other in less, probably, than three years. In other words, Sunday-school instruction, in our country, is generally enjoyed for less than an average period of three years by those who attend upon it with commendable regularity. The peculiar condition of Western society, and the local difficulties attending every institution of the kind, greatly abridge even this brief period with them. It is true that the revivals of religion at the West have embraced a large share of children and youth, and reasons for this will occur to any reflecting mind. They constitute the most impressible and unoccupied class. Their minds are not so much harassed with worldly cares and anxieties; and though error exists in its boldest and rankest forms, there is more freedom in combating it, and less fear of seeming odd, by being just what one pleases to be, religious or irreligious.

But is it not equally obvious that young Christians, in such a state of society, must be very much exposed to

snare and temptations? The want of pastoral instruction, the fluctuation of social and domestic circumstances, the absence of settled habits, (which of itself occasions an almost unavoidable dissipation of the mind,) these and many other causes are found to operate prejudicially upon the character and progress of youthful piety. And may we not hence urge the value of GOOD READING BOOKS to put into the hands of such youth, to supply the place of pastoral and parental instruction? What opportunity shall we have, like the present, to scatter the seeds of divine truth upon the Western soil?

There is nothing inflated or extravagant in the assertion that twenty thousand dollars' worth of good reading will do more for the West, in the year 1843, than twice or thrice that sum, if its expenditure is delayed ten—perhaps we may better say five—years. Some timid, or covetous, or unthinking man may say that this is all vain speculation, and that any society that wants money can find very plausible reasons why they should have it. We, therefore, introduce a passage or two from a mass of facts on this point, which may be found in the periodical publications of the Society. A distributer of Bibles in Wisconsin says—

“In my visiting from family to family, and from neighbourhood to village, I have felt more than ever the *value* of Sabbath-school instruction, and the pressing necessity that something should be done in this Territory, in the way of calling up the attention of the community to this subject.

“The object of my writing to you at this time is, to inquire of you if the peculiar wants of this Territory cannot be brought before your Society, and something done in the way of establishing schools and supplying them in part with a *library*. From the information I have on this subject, I am honest in the opinion that great *good* can be effected for the rising generation of this Territory, through the labours of a faithful agent, for a year, in visiting the destitute neighbourhoods, in aiding in the commencing of a school, and sti-

mulating them, by presenting them with a library in part, the *agent* having the books at his *command*. I am fully satisfied that \$250 worth of your books, placed in the hands of a good agent, *at this time*, would be of more lasting good than \$600 worth sent on as they may be called for. For, when you talk to those who are most in need of Sabbath-schools, and tell them they can have a small library, if they will start a school, it is more than they can comprehend;—and to send to New York or Philadelphia, it will be so long before they can get them, they abandon the enterprise. Now, here is wanted the agent; and his labours, if blessed of *God*, will be a greater blessing to this people than the labours of two missionaries preaching the gospel of Christ;—for we are made up of all the ends of the earth, and their peculiar *prejudices* are such, that you cannot reach them through the preaching of the gospel.”

Another says—

“O, if our eastern churches could but realize our wants, and the importance of having the gospel standard now erected, and the ‘foundations of many generations’ now laid, how much good, with small donations, they might do us in our struggling necessities! Our brethren at the East must help us to raise up bulwarks against the enemy when he comes in like a flood, or we may yet be swallowed up alive.”

We might add, that the reflex influence of a good Sunday-school on the church that sustains it, should secure for our object the most cordial sympathy and liberal aid of the friends of Home Missions, Tract efforts, and Bible circulation. “I wish I had time,” says one of our Western correspondents, “to go with you over this land, and point out the *marked difference* between the churches where there is a good Sunday-school, well watched over and cherished, and those where it is otherwise.” This is not exclusively a Western phenomenon. Some of us can find similar contrasts without crossing rivers or mountains.

IV. The last point we proposed to establish is, that such an institution as the American Sunday-school Union is indispensable to the supply of such necessities as we

have described. On this topic also, we must restrict ourselves to a very brief array of testimony.

The religious character and social habits of the population of many sections of the West, are incredibly diversified. A church in Illinois, for example, which contains not more than twenty members, has one or more persons from *eight* different States; and in one family of three individuals, one is from Ohio, the second is from Pennsylvania, and the third from Illinois. In a town of the same State, consisting of 800 souls, men, women and children, there are *eight* denominations, four of whom have places of public worship. A system of instruction and a library of books must be adapted to these peculiar circumstances, or its usefulness will be greatly circumscribed. Our question-books, libraries, &c., are in a good degree so adapted, and none others, within our knowledge, are.

"This vicinity," says one, who had received a donation of books for a school in the extreme West, "has a mixed population from various parts of the country, and most of the religious denominations prevail among them. But this library appears, so far, to promise the concurrence of all in the investigations of the Bible, and I trust the library will be useful here in no small degree."

A friend residing in one of the shire towns of Alabama says:—

"The Sunday-school of this place was formed in July of last year, and has been in operation ever since that time. The average number of children attending has been about thirty-five; which number, it is thought, can be readily increased to fifty. It is a Union school, being formed and patronised by all the religious denominations of the place, viz., Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians. From the first, it has been without a library of any sort, and has greatly needed one. It is held every Sabbath in the only church of the place, which was built a few

years ago, and is used by all the above-named denominations in rotation.

"We are surrounded by a rich and populous country, and having a steamboat communication with Mobile at all seasons, a Sunday-school and good library in this place must exert a salutary and extensive influence on the region around, and may become the nucleus of many others. As yet but few books of the American Sunday-school Union have found their way to this part of the country. We desire, therefore, to have a full set at the beginning, if you can furnish them."

An applicant for books residing on the banks of the Illinois river, says:—

"We have recently organized a church, under favourable prospects. The Methodist and Baptist brethren will unite with the Presbyterians in a Sabbath-school; and perhaps we might, in the course of the summer, raise something for books. Here are about 300 children who ought to attend Sabbath-school; making, in both places, about 500."

Would a denominational society command like confidence from such schools as we have described?

A citizen of Missouri, in acknowledging the receipt of a donation, says:—

"We feel a deep sense of your Christian kindness, and some faint appreciation, I trust, of the importance of the work in which you are engaged,—as one of the great means for promoting the cause of Christ; indeed, if I may be allowed to express my own feelings, I would say, generations yet unborn will rise up and call you blessed. I will not, I wish not to draw any comparison of the relative importance of the different benevolent societies of the present day. I bless God for them *all*. I feel that we need them *all*; but this much I may be allowed to say, I do not see how we in the West would get along, without precisely that kind of aid which your Society renders.

"How could we (otherwise) obtain a sanctified literature, to meet the wants of the immense multitude who are now rising up to fill this broad land; and where good literary and moral advantages are not within the reach of a vast proportion of the population?"

It is unnecessary to extend these extracts. Your Board cheerfully submit to the Society and its friends, that we have fully established the positions we took. We have shown that the proposed measure is feasible—that it is demanded—that it should be undertaken without delay, and that our Society is most happily organized to attempt it, with every prospect of success.

The question is therefore proposed to you, and through you to the churches and our benevolent citizens generally, whether it shall be done. If there is something else to do at home or abroad, more imperatively demanded—more practicable, or more likely to suffer from delay, let that be done rather than this. The point of view in which the subject presents itself to us, however, leaves no room for doubt, that whatever other good thing is left undone, the children and youth of our Western world should have Sunday-schools and libraries, as soon as it is possible to furnish them.

To secure the means of carrying out what we persuade ourselves will be the earnest and united desire of the Society and its friends, we must have secured to us the contribution of, AT LEAST, \$20,000. We might say \$40,000 or \$60,000 for effect, and with the expectation of obtaining but half, or one-third of the sum. But we come to you in soberness and truth, as the trustees or directors of a great project of moral improvement, and propose to undertake a *section of the work*. We have made our estimates of the cost with care, after diligent inquiry and on the best authority. The project cannot be carried forward, with any advantage or prospect of success, but with reasonable assurance of the sum we have named. Shall we spread our wants before the churches in a glowing circular? This has been tried by others, for similar objects, within the last year or two, and signally failed.

Shall we rely on voluntary and unsolicited contributions? Who trusts to them even to repair the desolation of fires or earthquakes? Shall we employ our usual agency? It is the prevailing mode of application to the churches, and is adopted by most of the societies who depend, like us, on periodical collections for the means of doing good. If suitable persons are employed, and the object is properly presented, may we not presume that the fruits of the agency will bear a just proportion to its cost? If our suit is denied, or treated with indifference, shall we abandon the effort? Shall we not rather urge it with more earnestness, and still more, till, by our very importunity, we weary men into some just appreciation of our object?

RECEIPTS

*Of the American Sunday-school Union, from March 1, 1842, to
March 1, 1843.*

To Cash on hand, March 1, 1842.....	\$206 00
Cash in Treasury.....	73 66—279 66
Amount received at the Philadelphia depository and branches, and from agents for sales of books, &c., and in payment of debts.....	46,670 65
Donations for General Fund.....	6,782 78
Donations for Valley Fund.....	4,915 87
Donations for Southern Fund.....	451 91
Donations for Foreign Fund.....	160 50—12,311 06



\$59,261 37

EXPENDITURES

*Of the American Sunday-school Union, from March 1, 1842, to
March 1, 1843.*

By GENERAL FUND: salaries and expenses of missionaries and agents, clerk-hire, &c.....	\$3,616 05	
Philadelphia Sunday-school Union.....	1,400 00	
Donations to Sunday-schools of books.....	862 73	
Discounts on uncurrent money, rents, postage, &c...	443 90	— 6,322 68
VALLEY FUND: salaries and expenses of missionaries and agents, clerk-hire, &c.....	2,353 97	
Donations to Sunday-schools of libraries and books.	2,417 54	
Postage, freight, discount on uncurrent money, &c...	77 60	— 4,849 11
SOUTHERN FUND: salaries and expenses of missionaries and agents, clerk-hire, &c.....	313 35	
Donations to Sunday-schools	538 06	
Postage and discount on uncurrent money.....	23 61	— 875 02
FOREIGN FUND: for books given to foreign missionary stations	832 72	
Freight	1 06	— 833 78
Salaries of secretaries, editor, superintendent of bookstore, book-keeper, salesman, clerks, and labourers	6,299 47	
Loans paid off.....	4,100 00	
Interest on loans, exchange, discount on uncurrent money, &c.....	2,172 24	
Miscellaneous books.....	2,286 43	
Binding	14,389 18	
Printing.....	4,918 88	
Colouring	177 34	
Stereotyping.....	1,618 82	
Paper	5,806 62	
Lithographic printing.....	804 70	
Copperplate printing.....	272 25	
Wood engraving.....	460 45	
Steel and copperplates	164 00	
Brass stamps.....	49 30	
Maps.....	201 49	
Straps, boxes, and library cases.....	374 85	
Copyrights	274 62	
Newspapers and advertising	116 00	
Ruling blank books and stationery	34 37	
Duties and Custom-house charges	155 90	
Freight and portorage.....	185 11	
Postage	284 92	
Insurance	366 25	
Taxes, \$332 50; water rent, \$21 00.....	353 50	
Alterations and repairs	76 15	
Painting and glazing.....	31 54	
Twine, nails, and tools.....	32 02	
Fuel and light	202 02	
Furniture.....	38 03	
Stoves, heater, &c.....	29 16	
Whitewashing, cleaning, brooms, brushes, marking ink, and incidental expenses	22 46	— 46,298 07
Balance on hand.....	46 00	
In Treasury	36 71	— 82 71
		<hr/> \$59,261 37

